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SUBJECT: POLISH VIEWS ON JANUARY 25-26 EU FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL

REF: EUR/ERA E-MAIL 01/15/2010

Classified By: Political Counselor Daniel Sainz for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Poland's EU Correspondent predicted the January 25-26 Foreign Affairs Council would focus mainly on EU assistance to Haiti, an area where new HighRep Ashton seems to have carved out a leading role. Poland supports Spanish Presidency plans to enhance EU engagement with Afghanistan and Pakistan, and will continue to press to ensure that the EU strategy complements the U.S. strategy, particularly with respect to civilian reconstruction. Poland will lobby other member states to merge the office of the EU Special Representative with that of the head of the EU delegation and to ensure that a prominent figure be named to the new double-hatted position. On Iran, Poland continues to press other member states to work to develop EU autonomous measures that will enhance UN sanctions. Poland remains concerned about the internal situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially Srpska Republika authorities' use of inflammatory rhetoric to undermine Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state. That said, Poland hopes the EU military mission will soon transition to training and advising activities. Poland believes the African Union should continue to take the lead in Somalia, with EU support. On Ukraine, Poland will continue to call for strategic discussions on how the EU as a whole can engage more effectively. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) PolOff delivered ref points January 20 to MFA EU Correspondent Cyril Kozaczewski, who responded with a summary of Poland's positions for the January 25 EU Foreign Affairs Council (FAC). Kozaczewski noted this will be the first FAC formally chaired by High Representative Ashton. The GOP has thus far been positively impressed with Ashton's engagement in EU foreign policy. Especially with respect to Haiti, Ashton "has projected a leading role for herself," he said. While Spanish Presidency officials continue to preside over meetings of the various coordination bodies -- e.g., PSC, COREPER -- Ashton and her staff have been more engaged than many EU member states expected.

HAITI

¶3. (C) Kozaczewski predicted ministers would spend most of their time discussing EU assistance to Haiti. The GOP will push for close U.S.-EU coordination, something Poland views as "essential." EU institutions have managed "relatively well," even though the post-Lisbon Treaty division of responsibilities is "still fuzzy," he said. Kozaczewski stressed Poland's commitment to provide assistance, but expressed disappointment that the GOP had neglected to mention in-kind assistance and anticipated contributions via Brussels when publicly announcing Poland's financial contribution of 50,000 USD -- "we need to improve our own internal coordination."

AFGHANISTAN

¶ 14. (C) Kozaczewski said the London Conference should send a clear message that a "transition phase" in Afghanistan has begun -- i.e., ISAF is starting to hand over to the Afghan government responsibility for security and governance. Poland supports the Spanish Presidency's plans with regard to a "realistic and proportional enhancement" of EU engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Any EU strategy should complement the U.S. strategy, with an emphasis on strengthening civilian reconstruction efforts. The March expiration of the EU Special Representative's mandate presents an opportunity to merge that office with that of the head of the European delegation in Kabul. The new double-hatted position should be filled by a person with considerable political experience, who comes from a country making a significant contribution to the international coalition in Afghanistan. Kozaczewski did not say whether Poland had a specific candidate in mind.

IRAN

¶ 15. (C) Kozaczewski said Poland's position on Iran was unchanged. Poland continues to press other member states to work to develop EU autonomous measures that will enhance UN sanctions. Asked about EU member state engagement of China and Russia on Iran sanctions, Kozaczewski said member states were inclined to "play a supporting role," in part because they believe the U.S. has more leverage.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

¶ 16. (C) Poland remains concerned about the internal situation

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in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially Srpska Republika authorities' use of inflammatory rhetoric to undermine Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state, Kozaczewski said. The EU should consistently urge political leaders to refocus their attention on genuine priorities, i.e., implementation of the five objectives and two conditions (5 2) set by the Peace Implementation Council and other EU-related reforms. Visa liberalization is an issue which shows that political leaders can find common ground for compromise when they see the necessity.

¶ 17. (C) On Operation Althea, Kozaczewski said Poland believes the EU's military presence is still needed, but that the EU should focus on training and advising activities. The transformation of the mission should not be linked to the closure of the Office of the High Representative (OHR). These are two independent processes and the transformation of EUFOR, "logical under current circumstances," should not be held hostage to the OHR issue.

SOMALIA

¶ 18. (C) Kozaczewski said that while the training of Somali forces should be led by the African Union (AMISOM mission), the EU should also be engaged. Emphasis on African ownership will have a positive impact on EU effectiveness and guarantee continued training by African countries.

UKRAINE

¶ 19. (C) Kozaczewski expressed regret that the Spanish Presidency had taken Ukraine off the agenda. Poland will continue to press member states to issue positive Conclusions on the first round of presidential elections, which Poland assesses as generally fair. Poland will also continue to advocate for more strategic discussions on how the EU as a whole can engage Ukraine.

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